Geraldine Paterson
interview transcript
by Becky Paterson

Discussions with Mama Geral

Mama Geral: Gwyn and Gerald were twins - mother's name was Mary.

Aunt Marilyn: They were not Aunt Lou's children?

Mama Geral: Uh,uh.

Dad: There are three different bunches.

Mama Geral: Mary Simms. She had twins and she died just a few days after that.

Aunt Marilyn: Aunt Lou was Addie's mother. She's not the mother of Eloise and all of them. Gwyn lived...did Gerald live? Gwyn lived and she's still living because I saw her when Addie died.

Mama Geral: Uh, huh. Gerald was grown and lived down in Louisiana somewhere.

Aunt Marilyn: So that's what it is. They (Gwyn and Gerald) were not Aunt Lou's children. They were children of the man that she married.

Mama Geral: Mary Simms...she was a Simms. She had a little boy, then the twins were born. She didn't live but just a few days after that. Aunt Eda took 'em and they lived down where Sam LAND is living now. Everyday she'd bring 'em in for _____ to see 'em. And I've heard her tell that at night a lot of times she'd pin 'em on a pillow and slept with all of 'em propped up, afraid that she'd go to sleep and what happened to little _____.

Aunt Marilyn: Any other day and time they would have been put in an incubator.

Mama Geral: They both lived. Gwyn's still living and he was grown.

Aunt Marilyn: But I still thought this was Henry's grandfather. Now he is what of Daddy Austin's?

Dad: (Daddy Austin's) Daddy.

Aunt Marilyn: Mother's (Mama Geral's) grandfather.

Mama Geral and Dad: Uh, huh.

Dad: And he had a brother named Elmer. Henry and Daddy Austin were cousins...I think first cousins.

Mama Geral: Henry is my half first cousin.

Dad: Whose first cousin?

Mama Geral: Mine.

Dad: Yours?

Dad and Aunt Marilyn: Supposed to be Daddy Austin's first cousin.

Dad: He probably ought to be your (Mama Geral's) first cousin if you think about the age.

Aunt Marilyn: But if this is Daddy Austin's daddy...mother's (Mama Geral's) grandfather, he can't be Henry's grandfather. He's Henry's uncle.

Dad: That's right. I can show you in a census I've got at home where Elmer and these guys are in the same family and they have children and they are all listed in the census, depending on which census it is, whose living in the household at the time. All those that you mentioned are shown as living in the household at the time and you can get the connection between the two. I think Henry and Daddy Austin were cousins, first cousins, because he (Henry) told 'em one time about when Daddy Austin and Uncle Tom showed him how to kill a deer without a gun...how to set a trap for 'em and stuff like that. So he was a lot younger than they were. Daddy Austin was about thirty years old and Henry was a lot younger. But that happens quite often.

Aunt Marilyn: Yeah...because there was Elizabeth and Levy and then Henry is next to Houston who's the youngest. But I guess Henry is next to the youngest. So see it could be.

Dad: Uncle Tom and his wife were living over there in the woods and when she died Uncle Tom had how many children?

Mama Geral: Two or three. And they moved over to their grandmother's and stayed and lived with her.

Aunt Marilyn: Jesse...

Mama Geral: Harry and Audis (ODIS) and Jesse. And they had one that was Ruth and she died.

Dad: What about Harry?

Mama Geral: Been dead a long time. And I thought there was one named Ruth been dead a long time. They lived on down where we went to the deer camp. Straight on

through until you you get to the hill that goes down to where the back of Spivy's fence is. That's where they lived. That's where Addie and Tyler and their momma and daddy lived. That's where that old Ruston man was sick...they thought he was lazy because he laid on the porch all the time.

Dad: Who was he?

Mama Geral: Addie's daddy, Ruston

Aunt Marilyn: I thought it was Craig.

Mama Geral: She married a Ruston.

Aunt Marilyn: She was a Craig and she married a Ruston.

Mama Geral: Yeah...and they had two children.

Dad: And he was laying on the porch all the time.

Aunt Marilyn: Now this Ida that was Uncle Tom and DADDY AUSTIN's sister. Who were her children?

Mama Geral: Jesse and Retha and Clemen.

Dad: Did they live down at Bastrop or somewhere?

Mama Geral: They lived down at Bastrop. Willie May still lives around Bastrop.

Dad: That's her first cousin isn't it?

Mama Geral: Retha and Jesse are in Georgia. Clemen and Parker are both dead.

Dad: They're your first cousins, aren't they?

Aunt Marilyn: She heard from Jesse the other day. So that's Ida's daughter, this Jesse that you hear from.

Dad: She lives in Georgia?

Mama Geral: Yeah. Retha and Jesse are in Georgia.

Aunt Marilyn: They are the only two left.

Mama Geral: And Willie May is in Bastrop. The other two are dead: Clemen and Parker.

Aunt Marilyn: I remember that name: Parker Scott.

Mama Geral: He was the one that was born after Ida married a Scott, Will Scott, and he died. Then she married another old fellow. They all called him some kind of doctor. They (who?) didn't like him and didn't want him there so Parker hid in the chimney one night and shot him and killed him. And a few days after that Parker's gone to the navy.

Aunt Marilyn: So Parker killed her second husband.

Mama Geral: The other day they (who?) were talking about it and said Lawrence Scott killed him and I said ain't no such thing, I said, Parker Scott killed him. I said I know what I'm talking about.

Aunt Marilyn: What is Jesse's name? Who did she marry?

Mama Geral: Thurman. She married a Thurman.

Aunt Marilyn: Mama hears from Jesse every Christmas. She got something from her the other day.

Mama Geral: Clemen is dead and Parker is dead. Retha's in Georgia and she's not able to do anything, she's diabetic. Jesse's not very well. She fell and hurt herself.

Dad: He killed his stepfather.

Mama Geral: Yeah.

Aunt Marilyn: But they never did do anything about it, did they?

Mama Geral: Everybody know who it was, but they never did anything about it because he was gone. He went to the navy right straight. He cleared himself out quick and they didn't do nothing about it. Old doctor somebody.

Aunt Marilyn: I guess Jesse's probably got more information.

Mama Geral: She's got more. Her birthday is February 3 and she's 89. I'll be 88 in February.

Aunt Marilyn: This is Jesse? Ya'll are about the same age?

Mama Geral: Yeah.

Dad: This fellow Scott that Ida married, was he from around here or did he live...? How did she get off form here?

Mama Geral: He _____ Scott) was a widower.They (Ida's family) all moved to Bastrop when the mill first opened up and everybody was making a lot of money. Her first husband (Scott) died.

Dad: Where did they live at?

Mama Geral: Well, they lived between Mt. Pleasant and down toward where...

Dad: Beach Creek?

Mama Geral: Pretty close to Beach Creek.

Dad: But they lived there and then he died? What did they do? Farm?

Mama Geral: Yeah. They farmed.

Aunt Marilyn: And after he died was when they went to Bastrop?

Mama Geral: Uh, huh. When they went to Bastrop. They all was grown and they went down there to work.

Dad: And they took her with them.

Mama Geral: She went down there with them.

Aunt Marilyn: She married this other guy after she went down there.

Mama Geral: She married him before she went.

Aunt Marilyn: Oh, she did?

Mama Geral: They were still living in the big house...it was a big house...it was about four or five steps high and it had a porch across the front and a big bedroom on each side and one on the other side and a hall all the way down and another bedroom and a dining room and a kitchen. It was a big old house. Parker and Mandy? lived there before they left around here. The house burned. They've sold the place now to somebody. It was a big old house. Yeah, they farmed...like all the rest of 'em around there.

Dad: Yeah, well, I didn't know. I thought maybe she had married this guy and they had moved off to Bastrop. I always knew they lived in Bastrop. I never saw her, I mean, she was never around. Uncle Tom and Daddy Austin were around, but I never would see her. She never was around much.

Mama Geral: They lived there. She pretty well stayed down there.

Aunt Marilyn: I'm like you. I never did see her, but I didn't realize until now that they were Daddy Austin's sisters. You know, Ida. But we talk about Mandy and Parker Scott and this Jesse, but I didn't realize they were Daddy Austin's sisters. Because I didn't know her (Ida) or if I ever saw her to know her. I just thought this Parker and Mandy Scott were some of the family, but I didn't realize they were some of Daddy Austin's sisters' children until now.

Dad: Did they come to the funeral, Daddy Austin's funeral?

Mama Geral: Uh,uh.

Aunt Marilyn: I don't guess.

Dad: His sister didn't come?

Mama Geral: Uh, uh. She was dead.

Dad: Oh, she was. O.K. I see.

Mama Geral: She's buried in Bastrop. Parker and _____ are buried in Bastrop.

Aunt Marilyn: So she died before Daddy Austin did.

Mama Geral: She died before he died. Anyway, they didn't come. Jesse was here when one of 'em was buried, when Lidy? Wilkerson was buried.

Dad: How are the Wilkersons related to you?

Mama Geral: She (Lidy) married a Wilkerson.

Dad: Who was she (Lidy)?

Mama Geral: She first married a Jones and then she married a Wilkerson.

Dad: She was Marty who?

Mama Geral: Uncle Tom's daughter Essie and Ida's daughter-they swapped husbands.

Dad: They swapped husbands?

Mama Geral: Uh,huh.

Aunt Marilyn: Uncle Tom's children...

Dad: Yeah, I know Essie.

Aunt Marilyn: That's where the Wilkersons come in. Isn't that right?

Mama Geral: Essie married a Wilkerson and Lidy married a Jones and they lived together for years and years and years until finally they swapped husbands some way or other.

Aunt Marilyn: But that's where the Wilkersons come from.

Dad: Mama Austin's sister Irene married Jack Roberts. What relationship is he to ~~Cuvine~~? Roberts?

Mama Geral: Cousin. The Roberts that lived here-they were brother and sister.

Aunt Marilyn: This ~~Cuvine~~ Roberts was Uncle Jack's sister.

Dad: Peggy...I'm talking about Henry's Peggy's daddy.

Aunt Marilyn: No, this was a different Roberts. I thought you were talking about...

Dad: No, she lives over there in a little house (it may still be there) by herself. But she married a man named Roberts evidently. Right?

Aunt Marilyn: But he wasn't any relation to Jack Roberts.

Mama Geral: If he was any relation, it wasn't close. I think it was a different family.

Dad: Mama Austin's sister Irene married this guy named Jack Roberts. What did you tell me he did for a living?

Mama Geral: Anything he could get by with. Anything he could get by with. I believe I was over there he was always home...ginning time, cottonseed time, enough of the niggers hanging around the plantation down there to seed the cottonseed and bring 'em up there to him.

Aunt Marilyn: He spent most of his life in the service, didn't he?

Mama Geral: Yeah, he was in the armed services.

Dad: World War I?

Mama Geral: Jack Roberts was in World War I and he got home when Dorothy? was 3 or 4 months old.

Aunt Marilyn: And he died in 1937; I was seven years old. He is the first person I remember a funeral...that died that I remember.

Dad: They lived over there...they had a house over there and two big old barns.

Aunt Marilyn: I remember that barn and he come back from the service and he had his helmets and all that stuff hanging in that barn. That's how I knew he was in the service. But I don't remember it that well. And I know he was sick, but I don't remember too much about that except mother has told me what was wrong with him...what we call pneumonia now.

Dad: I thought he had TB.

Mama Geral: Doctor Parker gave him a shot and it never did take. His arm was always in terrible pain.

Aunt Marilyn: Didn't you say pneumonia?

Mama Geral: Yeah.

Aunt Marilyn: Yeah. And back then pneumonia...they didn't know what to do about it. And I ya'll say later something about him being in the hospital and they raised the window.

Mama Geral: That was Daddy Austin.

Aunt Marilyn: No. That was Jack ya'll was talking about.

Dad: Then Daddy Austin too.

Aunt Marilyn: If they'd known how to deal with it like they do now... I can remember when you had pneumonia that was serious--well, it's still serious--but I mean...

Mama Geral: FAITH Peacock had pneumonia about six times. I remember you'd have to raise all the windows and open all the doors in the winter time. We went over there...people would nearly freeze.

Dad: Well, no wonder they died.

Aunt Marilyn: That's right.

Mama Geral: He'd lay there and everybody would say he won't make it this time, but he did. He wasn't as big as your fist.

Dad: Who did?

Mama Geral: J. L. Peacock's daddy. Everytime you'd turn around he had pneumonia.

Aunt Marilyn: But I remember when Uncle Jack come back from the service...just barely. I was only seven years old.

Dad: I always thought he had a lot of money or something. They went off to Pine Bluff and bought a boarding house and I just figured...

Mama Geral: Aunt Rene bought that after he died.

Dad: Where did she get the money for this

Aunt Marilyn: Well, she kept boarders, see.

Mama Geral: She kept boarders and paid for the house.

Aunt Marilyn: Yeah, that's what she did. All the schoolteachers out at Snyder boarded at her house. Then when she went to Pine Bluff that's what she bought, a boarding house.

Dad: Why did she go to Pine Bluff?

Aunt Marilyn: It (the boarding house) was just for girls and that's why she went. I guess the school was about to play out or something and that was her income was those teachers living there.

Dad: How many teachers did they have?

Aunt Marilyn: Well, she had in that house--I think now how in the world--she had Mr. and Mrs. ~~DeShawn~~. Dishroughn

Dad: Who was that?

Aunt Marilyn: That was my first grade teacher and that was a couple and they had that front room. Then she had two or three more. But that house just had four bedrooms, a dining room and then a back room.

Mama Geral: Four bedrooms. Two were upstairs.

Dad: Upstairs? There was no upstairs.

Mama Geral: Was when she kept boarders while he was in the service. She was on the homeplace then.

Dad: They did have another house there that burned. That's the upstairs you're talking about.

Mama Geral: After they burned that one she kept boarders.

Aunt Marilyn: But she kept boarders and someone told her about this house in Pine Bluff.

Mama Geral: Dorothy said she's the one who found it.

Aunt Marilyn: And she could pay for it by (keeping boarders)...and that's what she did. She didn't sell her other house.

Dad: The Moyers lived there but they just rented.

Aunt Marilyn: Uh, huh. I think they eventually bought it, but not when she first went to Pine Bluff.

Mama Geral: Mary and Noel moved there for a while.

Dad: You told me that one time ya'll were going to buy that place and something happened.

Mama Geral: Oh, yeah. They had it all fixed up and Daddy Dennis and Daddy Parkerson was going to buy it. Didn't neither one of 'em have the money to pay for it; I didn't see how they was going to buy it. And I couldn't see all of us living in that house.

Dad: Oh, ya'll were all going to live in it.

Mama Geral: Yeah, and I couldn't see that.

Aunt Marilyn: Well, one time Daddy Austin and Mama Austin wanted to buy it and they wouldn't sell it.

Mama Geral: I'll tell you the reason they didn't buy it. Jack Roberts "went under them" and bought the house. That's what happened.

Aunt Marilyn: But I think now, how did Aunt Rene keep that many.

Mama Geral: She built another room on the back; that was her room.

Aunt Marilyn: Still, she kept this couple and two or three more all the time.

Mama Geral: Course I know the day the house burned. They got everything pretty well out and they got the truck. I heard _____ say there we sat with a truckload of clothes and nowhere to go.

Aunt Marilyn: The teachers would come in and then there was that Hilda Graham that finally married the Timberlake boy--not Eugene, not the one that got killed in the service. But anytime a teacher came that was single they stayed there. That's the only place out there to stay to teach.

Mama Geral: When that house burned, they all went out and bought a church and beds and torn that thing down and moved it that day and built a house. Preacher didn't like it.

Dad: He shouldn't have sold it.

Aunt Marilyn: Jacob FOLDS lived in Lake Village. Then they moved in with her and she kept all those rooms upstairs ready. That's how she paid for that house (in Pine Bluff). Ruby never lived there but Jake did.

Mama Geral: She also had a garage apartment she kept ready.

Aunt Marilyn: Yeah, she did.

Mama Geral: Grandmother and Aunt Rene lived with us while Jack was in the service. That's where Dorothy was born. She was born in that room across the fireplace where the heater took a windowpane to run the pipe through. That's where she was born.

Aunt Marilyn: The only I remember is him (Jack) having those helmets hanging in the barn. Dorothy didn't have a thing to do with him...she like that hat. She like the helmets; she didn't like him.

Dad: She wasn't very old when he died. I guess he's buried right there in the Snyder cemetery where Aunt Rene is.

Mama Geral: Yeah, he's right there. That's what Rene said.

Dad: What happened to Uncle Tom's wife?

Mama Geral: I remember when she died; that's all I remember. They had an old poster bed way up yonder. They had to cut the posts off to get it out the door. That table you've (Aunt Marilyn) got is the legs on that bed.

Aunt Marilyn: Oh, is it? I knew you said Daddy Austin made it. I don't know how I managed to get that table because I got it before they moved out there to Hamburg and then when Mama Austin moved in the house with Aunt Maycel I already had that table. Cause I got the clock and I got something else.

Mama Geral: That chair was one of 'em, that chair there (at Mama Geral's house).

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